(c) whether Government have taken steps for repatriation of other wanted criminals; and

(d) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir;

(b) The Government of India provided solemn guarantees to the Portuguese Government according to which Abu Salem Ansari to be extradited to India would not be punished with the death penalty or with a prison exceeding 25 years. According to the Portuguese Constitution these guarantees were required before his extradition could be processed.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Government of UAE deported three (3) persons namely Ibrahim Kaskar, Ejaz Pathan and Mustafa Dousa who are wanted in Bombay Bomb Blast case during February to March, 2003. The request for extradition of Taher Mohd. Merchant an absconder in 1993 Bombay Blast Cases, in pending with the Government of UAE.

Passport applications in Karnataka

1708. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications received every day through direct submissions, speed posts, district passport cells and passport application collection centres in Karnataka;

(b) the average number of days taken to issue a passport;

(c) the special facilities provided for those who opt for Tatkal scheme; and

(d) the other people-friendly measures taken up of Bangalore Passport Office?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The average No. of Applications received everyday through:

(i)	Direct submissions	463
(ii)	Speed Post	110
(iii)	District Passport Cells	21
(iv)	Passport Application Collection Centre: Mangalore	127
	Gulbarga	21

(b) Bangalore Passport Office usually takes on an average 42 days to issue a fresh passport. However, currently, due to short supply of blank passport booklets from India Security Press, Nashik, it takes about 105 days to issue a passport. This matter is being followed up vigorously so as to obviate the delay in issuance of passports at present.

(c) Special facilities provided for those who opt for Tatkal Scheme:

A system has been put in place for the public to submit applications directly under the Tatkal scheme, with the necessary documents. This removes the need to visit the passport office twice for Tatkal submissions.

In order to reduce the waiting time for Tatkal applications, three Officers-RPO, APO and PRO- meet Tatkal applicants and give dates for collection.

Three Staff Members have been deployed to follow up tatkal cases on a daily basis. Requests for Tatkal are accommodated liberally.

Bangalore Passport Office currently accepts about 200 Tatkal cases daily on a regular basis. Tatkal dates given normally fall within 5-6 working days.

(d) The other people-friendly measures taken up at Bangalore Passport Office are:

An electronic token system has been introduced from May, 2005 whereby an applicant can take a token and come back later to submit his/her application, at the time mentioned on the token.

An electronic Kiosk with a touch-screen is available near the entrance of the office, to check the status of the application.

Miscellaneous services on existing passports are provided the same day.

The PRO responds directly to grievance e-mails. Most of the e-mails are replied to within a matter of hours.

A new software to indicate the status of applications automatically calculates the estimated despatch date, taking into account the date of submission, date of receipt of police verification report, date of grant of the passport and the date of allotment of the passport. Objections are also indicated as part of this format.

In addition, RPO Bangalore has also conducted a "Passport Adaalat" at Mangalore and "Passport service camps" for some of the large IT companies based in Bangalore.

The issue of short supply of blank passport booklets is being followed with the Indian Security Press, Nashik to reduce the delay in issuing of passports.

Indian companies engaged in reconstruction work in Afghanistan

1709. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian public sector and private sector companies engaged in reconstructions of Afghanistan;

(b) the full details thereof;

(c) the details of the projects where Indian companies are engaged;

(d) the number of employees of these companies engaged therein alongwith the steps taken for their security;

(e) whether Indian national working in Afghanistan were kidnapped and murdered during November, 2005; and

(f) if so, whether Government have any proposal for adequate compensation to the aggrieved workers and their families working in Afghanistan in case of such mishaps?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) There are seven public sector companies presently working in Afghanistan. These include Indian Airlines (IA), Broadcasting Engineering Consultants India Ltd. [BECIL], Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd. [TCIL], Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd., Hindustan Machine Tools (International) [HMTI], Water & Power Consultancy Service Ltd. [WAPCOS], Indian Telephone Industries [ITI], Punjab National Bank [PNB], Rail India Technical and Economic Service Ltd, [RITES] and Central Warehousing Corporation [CWC]. These companies are involved in various projects including air ticket sales office, TV transmission, microwave transmission, power transmission, construction of common facility and tool room centre, dam